

to see him. I have no doubt that he came to offer his services. I should like to know your majesty's wishes on the subject.

"Jerome is annoyed that your majesty has not yet explained your intentions as to the request which I made for him in two of my former letters.*

"I am told that M. de la Fayette was one of the first grenadiers of the national guard on duty at the Hotel de Ville.

"The barriers will be completely fortified to-morrow, and we shall begin to send artillery thither.

"General Caffarelli answered to the Duke of Conegliano that he had not yet received a reply from the Grand Marshal of the Palace to his request for permission to place twenty-five national guards at the Tuileries.

"P. S.—I have received your majesty's letter, dated to-day, from Nogent. I have already ordered its directions to be followed, and I will keep your majesty informed during the progress of their execution.

"The courier Remy will be the bearer of this letter."

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"NOGENT, February 8, 1814; 11 A. M.

"MY BROTHER—I have received your letter of the 7th, 11 P. M. It surprised me extremely. I have answered you on the event of Paris,† that you may not ask me any more about what is to follow it—a matter which interests more persons than me. When that hap-

* Joseph had proposed that he should be employed.—Tr.

† If Napoleon refers to any of the letters now published, they must be the two of the 6th of February. But neither of these letters mentions the empress or the King of Rome. Perhaps he refers to *viva voce* instructions.

It is to be observed that he never mentions the capture of Paris in direct terms. Here he alludes to it as "l'evenement de Paris." In his first letter of the 6th he calls it "Dans des moments extraordinaires;" in the second "Dans tout evenement imprevu."—Tr.

pens I shall be no more, consequently it is not for myself that I speak. I told you that the movements of the empress and the King of Rome, and the rest of our family, must be governed by circumstances, and you have not understood me. Be sure that, if the event takes place, what I have prophesied will certainly follow; I am persuaded that she herself has the same expectation.*

"King Louis talks of peace. His advice is ill-timed; in fact, I can understand nothing in your letter. I thought that I had explained myself to you, but you never recollect anything, and you are of the opinion of the first comer and of the last speaker.

"I repeat, then, in two words, Paris will never be occupied while I am alive. I have a right to be believed if I am understood.

"I will admit, that if through unforeseen circumstances, I should march toward the Loire, I should not leave the empress and my son at a distance from me, because, whatever happened, they might both be carried off to Vienna; this would be still more likely to take place if I were not alive. I cannot make out how, with all these intrigues going on around you, you can bestow such imprudent praise upon the proposals of traitors, who are incapable of giving honorable advice: never employ them, even in the most favorable circumstances. Besides, no one is bound to do what is impossible. I can no longer pay any of my officers: I have nothing.

"I own that I am annoyed by your letter of the 7th, 11 P. M., because I see that there is no coherence in your ideas, and that you allow yourself to be influenced by the chattering and the opinions of a set of people who never reflect. Yes, I will talk to you

* This seems to be an allusion to something that passed in conversation.—Tr.

openly. If Talleyrand has anything to do with the project of leaving the empress in Paris in case of the approach of the enemy, it is treachery. I repeat, distrust that man. I have dealt with him for the last sixteen years; once I even liked him; but he is undoubtedly the greatest enemy to our house since it has been abandoned by fortune. Keep to my advice. I know more than all those people. If we are beaten and I am killed, you will hear of it before the rest of my family. Send the empress and the King of Rome to Rambouillet; order the senate, the conseil-d'état, and all the troops, to assemble on the Loire: leave in Paris a prefect, or an imperial commission, or some mayors.

"I have told you * that Madame † and the Queen of Westphalia ‡ may remain in Paris in Madame's house. If the viceroy has returned to Paris, he may also stay there; but on no account let the empress and the King of Rome fall into the hands of the enemy.

"Be certain that, from that moment, Austria, the band which connected her with France being broken, ¶ would carry her off to Vienna, and give her a large apanage; and, on pretense of securing the happiness of the empress, the French would be forced to do whatever England and Russia might dictate. Every [national] party would thus be destroyed, for * * * §; instead of which, in the other case, the national feelings of the numbers whose interest it would be to rebel, make it impossible to foresee the result. ||

* Apparently in conversation.—Tr.

† Napoleon's mother.—Tr.

‡ Jerome's wife.—Tr.

¶ The words of the text are. "l'Autriche étant désintéressée." I think that this is their meaning.—Tr.

§ Illegible.—Ed.

|| The loss of the first part of this sentence renders the second part obscure.—Tr.

"However, it may happen that I beat the enemy on his approach to Paris, and that none of these things may take place. It is also possible that I may make peace in a few days. But, at all events, it appears from your letter of the 7th, 11 p. m., that you have no means of defense. Your judgment in these matters is always at fault; your very principles are wrong. It is for the interest even of Paris that the empress and the King of Rome should not remain there, because its welfare depends on their safety; and since the world has existed, I have never heard of a sovereign allowing himself to be taken in any open town. This would be the first instance.

"The unfortunate King of Saxony has just reached France; he is beginning to lose his happy illusions.

"In difficult and critical circumstances a man does his duty, and leaves the rest to take its course. If I should happen to live, I ought to be, and I have no doubt that I shall be, obeyed; if I die, my son, as sovereign, and the empress as regent, must not, for the honor of the French, allow themselves to be taken; they must retreat to the last village.

"Remember what was said by the wife of Philip V. What, indeed, would be said of the empress? That she had abandoned our throne and that of her son. Nothing would better please the allies than to make an end of everything by carrying them off prisoners to Vienna. I am surprised that you do not see this. I see that fear has turned all your heads in Paris.

"The empress and the King of Rome, once at Vienna, or in the hands of our enemies, you and all others who attempted a defense would be rebels.

"As for me, I would rather they would kill my son than see him brought up at Vienna as an Austrian prince, and I think well enough of the empress to be-

lieve that she is of the same opinion, as far as that is possible to a woman and a mother.

"I have never seen Andromaque acted without pitying the fate of Astyanax in surviving the rest of his house, nor without thinking that it would have been a blessing for him if he had died before his father.

"You do not understand the French nation. It is impossible to foresee the ultimate result of such great events as these.

"As for Louis, I think that he ought to follow you."

The only letter written by the empress which appears up to this date possesses interest, as revealing the affectionate nature of the Austrian successor to the peerless Josephine.

MARIE LOUISE TO JOSEPH.

"PARIS, February 8th, 1814.

"MY DEAR BROTHER—I received last night a letter from the emperor, dated the 6th. He tells me that he is well, and that circumstances, although they are difficult, have improved during the last week. He desires me not to be anxious; you know that this is impossible. If you have any details, it will be very kind in you to send them to me. You see, my dear brother, from my teasing you in this way, the confidence which I have in your friendship and patience. I entreat you to believe in the friendship of your affectionate sister."

The want of muskets was the fatal difficulty in the way of defending Paris. The Russian war had made an enormous waste of arms, and it had been impossible in so brief a period to supply the deficiency. Multi-

tudes, who asked for weapons, were denied. But for this the capital might have been secure.

The ex-King of Spain, in a further communication, alluded to a proposed order by the empress for public prayers and religious ceremonies, in a manner that discloses the unrest of the Catholic population, and also the magazine of feeling, which a spark might kindle into a conflagration.

JOSEPH TO NAPOLEON.

"PARIS, February 8, 1814; midnight.

"SIRE—I have desired M. de la Bouillerie to make arrangements which will enable him, if I desire him to leave Paris with the treasure, to set off in six hours after receiving the order. He has, therefore, been obliged to load some fourgons, and to house them in the court of the Grand Ecuyer on the Carousal. This was effected in the night, and the officers on guard in the palace alone can have been aware of it. The director of the Museum came to-day to tell me that it ought to be shut up, and the things of most value sent out of Paris, unless I gave him orders to the contrary. As your majesty has given none to me, I could give none to him. If I should receive any from your majesty, I will communicate them without delay.

"It appears to me, sire, that the proposed solemnity at St. Geneviève will not have a good effect. The public is already so depressed, and so inclined to trust to accidents for its defense, that we ought not to increase its inactivity by telling it to hope for safety from religious intercession. I may add, that to the incredulous these prayers would be a mere ceremony, or an avowal of danger and of distrust in our own exertions. With respect to the good Catholics, your

majesty may rest assured that the government will obtain nothing from them till you are publicly reconciled to the vicar of Jesus Christ. No, sire, in France none are truly religious but those who acknowledge the Pope as their spiritual head. The rest are not Catholics, but unbelievers or Protestants. Therefore, till I see in the *Moniteur*, 'The Pope has returned to Rome: the emperor has ordered him to be properly escorted and received there,' I do not think that any religious ceremony would produce an impression on the Catholics in your majesty's favor. This, sire, is the truth. The empress is in better spirits to-day. I have passed the day in sustaining the hopes of people who have much less self-possession than belongs to her majesty."

Napoleon approved the suggestion, and the appeal to the religious element was abandoned.

Like the flames of a burning forest around a solitary clearing, the foes of France, with the fire of battle, girdled the interior of France, and swept onward toward Paris and the throne. The emperor desired peace, and gave Caulaincourt full powers "to keep the negotiations alive, and save the capital." On the 8th the Duke of Vicenza proposed a treaty on the basis of the ancient limits of France which were the frontier before 1789, and nearly its present boundary; while the "natural limits" were the Alps, the Pyrenees and the Rhine. Napoleon consented to sign these conditions, as a subsequent letter will disclose, if the allies would immediately cease hostilities. This they refused to do, and the conference closed. They declared that signing preliminaries would not close the war—the treaty must be definitely settled. Meanwhile, Joseph wrote earnestly in behalf of peace.

JOSEPH TO NAPOLEON.

"PARIS, February 9th, 1814; 11 A.M.

"SIRE—I have received your letters of the 8 that 8 P.M. I have sent the one to the empress Josephine, and I am expecting an answer by Tascher. After the cabinet council I will see MM. de Feltre and d'Hauterive. The Minister of war has written to me a letter which I send on to your majesty; you will see that our muskets are reduced to six thousand. It is, therefore, useless to expect to form a reserve of from thirty to forty thousand men in Paris. Things are stronger than men, sire; and when this is clearly proved, it seems to me that true glory consists in preserving as much as possible of one's people and one's empire; and that to expose a precious life to such evident danger is not glorious, because it is against the interests of a great number of men whose existence is attached to your own. Your majesty may rest assured that I shall faithfully execute your commands, whatever they may be. No one here has anything, directly or indirectly, to do with what I am writing to your majesty in perfect openness, just as it occurs to me.

"I see so much depression, that I fear that it is useless to expect an army of reserve, or any extraordinary effort to be made in Paris: you must, therefore, submit with fortitude to necessity; whether you are permitted to make a great nation happy, or you are forced to yield, there being no choice left except between death and dishonor; and, at this juncture, I see no dishonor for your majesty, unless you abandon the throne, because in this case you would ruin a number of individuals who have devoted themselves to you. If it be possible, then, make peace at any price; if that is impossible, when the hour comes we must meet

death with resolution, as did the last Emperor of Constantinople.

“Should this occur, your majesty may be persuaded that I shall in every respect follow out your wishes, and that I shall do nothing unworthy either of you or of me.”

The Silesian army, in four divisions, under Blucher, Sacken, D'York and Alsusief, was marching on Paris down the Marne, and also along another road across the marshy country by Vertus, Etoges and Montmirail. The allied grand army, commanded by Schwartzberg, whose headquarters were at Troyes, was moving toward the capital through the valley of the Seine. Napoleon, at Nogent, upon the latter river, was between the two armies, and on the 9th designed, by a flank movement to Sézanne, to attack Blucher, while separated from the other portion of the invading host. Unexpectedly at Baye he encountered a division of the enemy, and, after a fierce contest, defeated it, and reached Sézanne the same day. “The next day, the 10th, he beat Alsusief at Champ-Aubert; on the 11th he defeated Sacken at Montmirail; on the 12th he defeated York at Chateau-Thierry, and, finding that Blucher was advancing, he turned back to Montmirail, and on the 14th defeated him with great loss at Vauchamps, a village between Montmirail and Etoges, and drove him back through Etoges to Chalons.

“But Schwartzberg was profiting by Napoleon's absence to march on Paris by the Seine. He drove Victor out of Nogent, occupied Montereau, and penetrated beyond Nangis to Mormant, a village not more than twenty-five miles from Paris. Three marshals, Oudinot, Victor, and Macdonald, were opposed to him with a force of about forty-seven thousand men, but

they appear to have expected defeat, and earnestly implored Napoleon's presence. Napoleon left Montmirail on the 15th, a few hours after he had defeated Blucher, reached Meaux the same day, and on the 16th joined his marshals at Guignes, a small town at the intersection of the roads from Meaux to Melun, and from Paris to Nogent. On the 17th he drove the Russians, under Count Pahlen, from Mormant, and entered Nangis, and on the 18th he drove the Prince of Wirtemberg out of Montereau, and marched on Troyes, from whence the allied sovereigns and Schwartzberg fled in terror, and scarcely paused until they found themselves more than one hundred miles off at Langres. In nine days he gained seven victories, made nine marches in the depth of winter, most of them over cross-roads, such as the cross-roads of France then were, and drove away or frightened away two armies, each much larger than his own.

“It is not surprising that such wonderful success, immediately following two years of almost uninterrupted disaster, somewhat intoxicated him, and led him to believe that the chances were again in his favor, and even to imagine that the allies themselves had little hope of escaping with many of their troops from France.”

The general feeling and the condition of affairs at the capital during these triumphs, are fully and forcibly portrayed in the words of the chief of the council of state :

JOSEPH TO NAPOLEON.

“PARIS, February, 11, 1814; 7 A.M.

“SIRE—I did not receive your letter dated Sézanne, the 10th, 10 A.M., till to-day at seven. I have despatched a courier to inform Marshal Macdonald of your

majesty's arrival at Champ-Aubert, on the rear of the enemy's column, then at Montmirail.

"Nothing remarkable is going on here. The public mind continues in the same state. The wives and children of many of the principal public functionaries have left the capital. The rise in the funds which took place yesterday is attributed to a letter from the Duke of Vicenza, giving hopes of the negotiations terminating favorably. Every one is persuaded that our affairs can be reestablished in no other way; the state of the exchequer and the arsenals is known to all the world; and whatever prodigies may yet be expected from the experience and skill of your majesty, it is not thought possible that you can struggle alone against numbers and circumstances. The ministers have doubtless already informed your majesty that one of the Bourbons has joined Lord Wellington's army, and that another is in Holland. Many sick have arrived here. Money is wanting to pay the troops; they commit in consequence all sorts of irregularities, which exasperate the inhabitants to such a degree (I can speak chiefly of those of Versailles, Compiègne, and Senlis), that it is not uncommon to hear it said publicly, 'The enemy could not do worse.'

"I do not write these disagreeable truths to your majesty for the sake of persuading you to make peace—I know that you desire it more than any other person—but in order to console you, if you should be forced to submit to conditions to which France would not be reduced, if the strength of mind of all her people were in proportion to that of her sovereign. I entreat your majesty to believe that my language to the rest of the world is very different; but I am obliged to own that there is no salvation for us but in the speediest peace, on whatever conditions. I know no one who is of a

contrary opinion. Your majesty's most faithful servants are chiefly distinguished by their profound conviction that, with peace, your majesty will find in your own genius, and in the confidence of the nation, means to restore our affairs."

Again the negotiations for peace were opened, but Napoleon refused to sign an armistice on the former terms of treaty. His circumstances had greatly changed, and instead of a willingness to obtain a cessation of hostilities upon the humbling conditions of the "ancient limits," according to the earnest desire of his brother and other leading minds at Paris, he demanded a retreat from his dominions. The whole course of momentous events at this decisive time, is given in the unreserved utterance of the emperor's policy in his correspondence. The fact, which some historians warmly dispute, that he identified himself and his family with the glory of France, with an unrivaled ambition, appears from his own confession. It is equally evident that under the power of royal associations, and fearing the spreading influence of a *new man*, both in his system of government, and contempt of the "divine right" of kings, England with her allies was resolved, at every sacrifice of treasure and blood, to crush Napoleon, and restore the indolent, worthless Bourbons to the throne of France.

NAPOLEON TO JOSEPH.

"NANCY, February 18, 1814.

"MY BROTHER—Prince Schwartzberg has at last shown signs of life. He has just sent a flag of truce to ask for a suspension of hostilities. It is hard to be dastardly to such a degree. He constantly, in the most insulting terms, rejected every species of suspen-

sion of arms or armistice; and after the capitulation of Dantzic and that of Dresden he refused even to receive my flags of truce, a barbarity of which there are few examples in history. On the first repulse these wretches are on their knees. Happily the Prince of Schwartzberg's aide-de-camp was not allowed to come within our posts. I received only his letter, which I shall answer at my leisure. I shall not grant any armistice till I have cleared my territory of them. From what I hear, the allies seem to have quite changed their minds. The Emperor of Russia, who, a few days ago, broke off the negotiations, because he wished to impose upon France worse conditions than those of our ancient limits, wishes now to renew them; and I hope that I may soon attain a peace founded on the terms of Frankfort, which are the lowest I could accept with honor.* Before I began my last operations, I offered to sign on the basis of the ancient limits, provided they would cease hostilities immediately. This proposal was made by the Duke of Vicenza on the 8th. They refused. They said that even the signature of preliminaries would not put a stop to hostilities; that the war should last till all the articles of peace were signed. They have been punished for this inconceivable answer, and yesterday, on the 17th, asked for an armistice!

“You may well imagine that on the eve of a battle † which I was resolved to win, or to perish, when, if I failed, my capital was taken, I would then have consented to anything rather than run so great a risk. I

* The terms offered by the allies from Frankfort were what the French have called the “natural limits” of France, namely, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine.

The term “ancient limits” signifies the frontier of France before 1789, and with slight modifications, her present frontier.—Tr.

† Napoleon uses the word battle to signify his whole connected operations against Blücher.—Tr.

owed this sacrifice of my pride to my family and to my people. But since they refused these terms; since the danger has been encountered; since everything has returned to the ordinary risks of war; since a defeat no longer exposes my capital; since all the chances are for me, the welfare of the empire and my own fame require me to make a real peace. If I had signed on the terms of the ancient limits, I should have rushed to arms in two years, and I should have told the nation that I had signed not a peace, but a capitulation. I could not say this in present circumstances, for, as fortune is again on my side, I can impose my own conditions. The enemy is in a very different position from that which he occupied when he made the Frankfort propositions; he must now feel almost certain that few of his troops will recross the frontier. His cavalry is worn out and low; his infantry is exhausted by marches and counter-marches; he has lost all heart. I hope, therefore, to make a peace such as will satisfy a reasonable man; and I wish for no more than the conditions of Frankfort. Whisper that the enemy finding himself embarrassed, has asked for an armistice, or a suspension of hostilities, which was absurd, as it would have deprived me of the fruit of my operations: add that this shows how thoroughly he is disheartened. Do not let this be printed, but let it be repeated in every quarter.”

Napoleon in vain looked for a more yielding spirit in the enemy. A second “expedition of the Marne” was the plan of the tireless, ubiquitous genius of the man who has no equal in the energies of body and mind, and the amazing versatility of his talent. On the 18th he met and conquered two divisions of the enemy near Montereau, and secured the bridge on the Seine. His